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AN UNPRINTED VERSION OF "A CRISTEMASSE SONG."

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—Among the beautiful carols of the Virgin and her Child, published by Dr. Dyboski from Richard Hill's *Commonplace-book*,¹ there is none more touching than the *Gloria in Excelsis*, as it might be called. The dialogue between the holy mother and her son, carried through eleven stanzas, depicts the heart-wrung Maiden, distraught at the grief of her Child, learning for the first time of the sorrows that are in store. At the same time there ring above this poignant sorrow the joyous notes of the angels singing in heaven. "The poem," says Professor Padelford,² "portrays the crushing grief of the Virgin with the naïve fidelity and tenderness characteristic of medieval workmanship."

It needs no excuse, therefore, if I call the attention of students of the period, and particularly of the editors of future carols, to a manuscript containing the first stanzas of this carol, in an unnoticed version decidedly better than that published by Dr. Dyboski. This ms., Laud 683, is probably not later than 1460, and it therefore antedates the Hill version by at least seventy years. Its version corrects that of the worthy song-loving freeman of Grocers Hall, to an extent that makes printing the whole text advisable. I therefore subjoin a literal transcript of the Laud copy, which is on the last folio, 105b, an odd page left vacant. The leaves which contained the rest of the song, and possibly other carols, are lost. As is customary in such texts the refrain is given as a heading, and not repeated in full thereafter.

HERE BEGYNNETH A CRISTEMASSE SONG.

[fol 105b

Synge we with angelis. gloria in excelsis ^a

A babe is born, our blysse to brynge,¹

A maide ther was dyd² lully and synge;

¹ Early English Text Society, Extra Series, CI (1908). The poem is printed pp. 21-23. It has also been printed by Flügel in *Festschrift für R. Hildebrand*, 1894, and in *Anglia*, xxvi, 247 (1903). Prof. Holthausen corrected his text in *Anglia*, xvii, 444.

² *Cambridge History of English Literature*, II, 382. He seems ignorant of this Laud text.

She saide: "dere sone, leve thy wepynge,
Thy flader ys the kyng of blys."
Synge we, [with angelis, gloria in excelsis].

"Lullay," she sange and saide³ also,
"My nowne⁴ dere sone, why artow⁵ wo?
Hauē I not do that⁶ I sholde do?
Thy grevaunce, telle me what it is!"
Synge we, [etc.]

"Nay, modir,⁷ for this⁸ wepe I nought,
But for the wo that shal be wrought
To me, er⁹ I mankynde haue bought:
Was neuer no¹⁰ sorwe so lyk, I wys."¹¹
Synge we, [etc.]

"A, pore dere sone!¹² telle me not soo,
Thow art my child, I haue no moo;
Sholde I se men myn owne sone slo?
Allas! dere child,¹³ what menyth¹⁴ this?"
Synge we, [etc.]

"Yis, modir, myn handis,¹⁵ that ye here¹⁶ se,
They¹⁷ shal be nailed to¹⁸ a tre,
My fleet also fastened¹⁹ schul be;
That man shal wepe that seeth²⁰ this."
Synge we, [etc.]

"Allas, dere child!²¹ hard ys myn²² happe,
To se my sone that sook²³ my pappe,
His handys, or²⁴ feet, that I sholde lappe,²⁵
Be nailed so sore,²⁶ that neuer dyd amys."
Synge we [with angelis, gloria in excelsis].

Variants in Hill's version: Refrain ^a. Now synge (in every case). This points to the dropping of final -e as a song syllable, in Hill's version. 1. to blys us brynge. Holthausen corrected to "us blis to brynge"; but Dyboski defended Hill, and said *brynge* might be subjunctive. 2. I hard a mayd. 3. said & songe. 4. Myn own. 5. art bow. 6. as. 7. Nay dere moder. 8. þe. 9. or. 10. om. Hill. 11. ywis. 12. Pesse dere sone. 13. my dere son! 14. menys. 15. My hondis, moder. 16. may. 17. om. Hill. 18. vnto. 19. all so fast. 20. Men shall wepe that shall se. 21. A, dere son! 22. my. 23. sokid. 24. his. 25. dide wrappe. 26. Be so naylid.

HENRY NOBLE MACCRACKEN.

WRITERS WITH NEW IDEAS.

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—When a writer or speaker is struck powerfully by a new idea, he generally shows marvelous ingenuity in working it into his next production. I have found what seems to me a curious instance of this often exemplified tendency. In *Les Annales Politiques et Littéraires* for March 28th, the French critic Émile Faguet re-